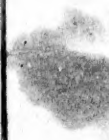


W



C

RT

21
THOUGHTS

ON

THE PRESENT STATE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA,

WITH

**HINTS FOR SOME IMPROVEMENT IN HER
ECCLESIASTICAL ARRANGEMENTS;**

HUMBLY ADDRESSED TO THE

RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP AND THE REV. CLERGY.

BY A PRESBYTER OF THE DIOCESS OF QUEBEC.

PRINTED FOR THE PUBLISHER.

1836.

55

RECEIVED

1917

THOUGHTS

ON

THE PRESENT STATE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA.

In presuming to address my venerable and beloved diocesan and my reverend brethren, on a subject of such importance, as that to which I here call their attention, I lay claim to no high official station ; to no extensive influence, which, of itself, would give weight to any opinions or suggestions I may offer, for none such do I possess. I only claim their forbearance, as one that has facts to state, and arguments to offer, till they have considered those facts, and weighed well those arguments. I wish to call their attention to things, which must *depend entirely* upon *themselves* for weight, and not to opinions, which might derive influence chiefly from the rank or character of him who holds them ; and therefore do I regret the less, that I possess not that influence, so desirable under other circumstances, assured, as I am, that my statements and suggestions will, on that very account, not be received, unless they find their own way to every man's judgment, and speak for themselves to every man's heart.

In looking at the state of our church, at the present time, and comparing it with what it was ten years ago, I would do violence to my own feelings, as well as to those of many others, were I to withhold that acknowledgment of devout gratitude, so justly due to her great Head, who has showered down upon her of his blessings, both temporal and spiritual. A certain, though limited provision has been made for her permanency in many parishes ; and, almost every where throughout the length and breadth of her borders, have her members come up more closely to the purity and holiness so striking in all her services. These mercies I would make the ground for calling the attention of those, who love our Zion, to the wants and difficulties which *still* surround her. I would call the attention of those who have received these mercies, to the condition of those who have received them not. I would crave the attention of all, to the *necessity*, which lies upon us to adopt measures, which, under God, may be the means of at once extending to others, and confirming to all those blessing, which some so happily enjoy. There are, thanks be to God, many places supplied with able and devoted clergymen, which wanted them ten years ago ; but there are *far more* who want them *now* ; and to supply which, we cannot look to the same quarter whence we have hitherto been so kindly assisted. Scattered throughout

this extensive diocese, there are *thousands* of church people, who not only, no longer "hear the sound of the church going bell," but who never see the face of a minister of their church, at whose mouth they may learn wisdom, at whose hands their children may receive baptism, and themselves partake of the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper! That *such is the case*, no one, at all acquainted with the destitute condition of the newly settled and back townships, can deny. That *such is indeed* the case any who may take the trouble to read the Rev. Adam Elliot's journals, will soon learn. They will there perceive that the numbers of church people far exceeded any ideas that he had formed on the subject; that his fixed conviction is, "that the church in this country has not merely been misrepresented by persons of different parties and persuasions, respecting her influence and extent, but also that the number of her members and adherents has been greatly underrated by Episcopalians themselves." They will there perceive, too, the extreme readiness with which they ever embraced those opportunities which his invaluable labors afforded them, of attending upon the services, and joining in the beautiful liturgy of the church they love, and in the bosom of which they wish to die. They will also perceive with pain, that these devoted children of the church cannot help expressing their regret, that *though her children, they are the most neglected and destitute denomination of christians in this flourishing country!* But we are not confined to these statements, strong as they are, to learn the destitute condition of our fellow churchmen in this diocese. The very printed returns of the number of emigrants, who have made this country their home, will give us a startling idea of the numbers of those who would cry to our excellent bishop for help, were they not assured that their cry would be in vain. The case of one district may serve to give us some view of their destitution. In 1832, about eight thousand English settled in the Newcastle district alone. Now suppose we give three thousand of these as not belonging to our church (far more than a fair proportion) there will still remain five thousand immortal beings, who had a *right* to look to our church for spiritual assistance. To this body of people one solitary clergyman has been sent; and settled, as he is, in a town, confined to it by the calls upon his time, which are immediate and pressing, his services must chiefly be confined to those around and near him, whilst those more distant and scattered over a wide extent of country, must either be unattended to, or else be served by others than clergymen of our church. Exertions have indeed been made to secure for this district the services of a travelling missionary, but none has as yet been appointed; and even should one enter upon this field forthwith, he will find that of the five thousand church people there *four years* ago, many have gone to their graves without the prayers and consolations of a christian min-

ister, and that their bodies have been laid in the ground as are those of the horse and the ox ; that others, despairing of ever seeing the ministrations of our church, have joined the dissenters, whose ministers have been from the first amongst them ; that some have even worshipped at the altar of the mystical Babylon, whilst not a few have fallen into a state of utter indifference to the things of eternity, living, as does the savage Indian, without religion, without God in the world. But this is not a solitary instance. The picture here given will suit other districts, and most of the newly settled parts of the country.

Here and there, in some of the districts, the neat churches look like green spots in the desert, few, and, indeed, scattered ; but, on that very account, affording to the soul of the pious beholder, the greater enjoyment.

The society in Toronto "for converting and civilizing the Indians and propagating the gospel among destitute settlers in Upper Canada," has done faithfully what its means have enabled it to do. It has, indeed, tried its utmost to further the great work in which it has engaged. Its missionaries are unwearied ; their fields are far too large ; their visits to each section of the country far too unfrequent ; yet still whole districts abounding with church people, have in no way benefitted by their exertions. If it be asked, why this is the case, the answer is plainly, though reluctantly, given ; their resources are too scanty ; they can engage no more missionaries than they now have, and these cannot be omnipresent. But it may again be inquired, why are their resources so small ? This is a question to be answered by those, who have it in their power to increase them, and yet have failed to do so. At present her field is *Upper Canada*, reaching from the waters of the Ottawa to those of lakes Huron and St. Clair. If *three* missionaries are adequate for this labor, they must exceed even the greatest of missionaries, the blessed apostle Paul. The Rev. A. Elliot, whose fame is justly in all the churches, who bids fair to equal his celebrated namesake, and who has had the best opportunities for forming a fair, dispassionate judgment on the subject, states that the *Home district alone requires ten missionaries*. The Rev. W. F. S. Harper, whose labors are most abundant, says that *less than nine cannot supply the wants of the destitute settlers in the Midland district*.

Taking the wants of these districts as our guide, we come to the conclusion, that *not less than one hundred are required for Upper Canada, while Lower Canada requires perhaps forty* ! This may appear a large number, but not at all too large for the actual wants of our people ; not too large to perform that service which our destitute population have a *christian right* to look for from their more highly favored brethren. But "how are these missionaries to be obtained, and in what way do you think it possible to raise funds for their support ?" are questions which I

will endeavor to answer by and by. That they *are wanted*, that they might be *usefully employed*, in instructing our thousands of destitute brethren ; that *not more than three can now be supported* are the points to which I wish, at present, to call the attention of those to whom these pages are addressed.

The next subject that attracts our attention, *is the state of the older parishes*. Here things are encouraging, if we look only at the *present*. But is it not the part of a wise man, to provide in time against a storm ? And do not we see, that this is an age abounding with storms, and that, in a storm, the government would be to us no place of refuge ? Do not all see that, though the faith of the government be pledged, yet that government may be obliged to yield to the increasing power of the radical faction ; that it may itself be overturned, or that this country may be separated from the mother country ? In case any one of these calamities should occur, (none of which are so improbable in an age like this, that a wise man would think it being over prudent to guard against its occurrence,) could the clergy support themselves and families on nothing ? Would the parishes yield a sufficient support for them, if they were thus thrown upon them, when their shoulders were unused to the burden, having ever before been entirely unaccustomed to bear even the smallest weight ? I think not ; or else human nature is very different from what I imagine it to be ; very different from what it shewed itself to be, when, at the American revolution the Protestant Episcopal Church met with a calamity similar to that which I have supposed it possible may happen to our church. She then found that the foreign and government assistance, which she had ever considered of great service to her, as it doubtless was, could avail her nothing in such an evil hour. She found that her people, enervated by foreign aid, were not fitted for bearing the burden thus suddenly thrown upon them ; that she had scarcely any strength within herself, and that it would have been far better had she provided for the evil hour when it was yet at a distance. But the error was perceived when too late. For more than twenty years she was unable to rise from the blows her improvidence had unfitted her for sustaining, and to supply with ministers those churches that had, by it, been deprived of their ministers.

If our churches are similarly situated ; if there is any probability of our support from the government being cut off, by any of the sudden changes of the times ; if there is any probability of our endowments being wrested from the church, in case of a separation from the mother country, which all must acknowledge to be things by no means impossible, when we look to the state of affairs either here or at home ; if, in the case of any such event, our parishes are unprepared for supporting the ministrations of religion, is it wise in us to fold our arms in indifference, hoping that "to-morrow will be as this day and much more abundant ?"

The next subject that craves our attention is the *means of supporting our Diocesan*, when the Lord, in the inscrutable ways of his providence, shall be pleased to take from us him, (which day may it be yet distant,) who has so faithfully and so successfully labored amongst us for such a length of time. Some means of support must be devised other than that hitherto enjoyed, for that is to be discontinued when our beloved father shall be called to enter into that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." If no means of support are provided, either no Bishop can be obtained, or the office must be conferred upon one of the Rectors, who would be obliged to hold it in connection with his rectory, in which case its duties could be but inadequately performed, or it must go a-begging, till a clergyman of independent fortune can be found, willing to take upon himself its responsibilities and its labors. But it may be objected, that one of the arch-deacons might be consecrated to the office. This I deny not; but I would remind the objector that the allowance hitherto made by the government to the arch-deacons, will also be withdrawn on the demise of the present incumbent. That under our present ecclesiastical arrangements, *no permanent fund for the support of our Bishop could be raised*, must be manifest to all who have attempted to raise any sum by the usual means adopted throughout our congregations.

Hitherto there have been societies organized in the principal towns of the diocess for circulating the scriptures, prayer-books, and other religious works and tracts; but there has been great cause to regret, that so few embarked with any zeal in the cause; that the means at the disposal of the societies were so small; and that the number of books circulated bore no proportion to the numbers of church people in the neighborhoods of the several depositories.

The *impossibility of furnishing*, under present arrangements, *our church with suitably educated clergymen*, natives of the Province, is the next subject that calls for our attention. Without depreciating in the least the valuable services of the clergy from England and Ireland, to whom the church owes much of its improvement, within the last ten years, I think that all will acknowledge, that young men, educated in the country, habituated to the manners and customs of the people, endeared to the fatigues and privations attendant upon a missionary's life in new countries, and accustomed to the climate, from which many strangers suffer severely, are, *cæteris paribus*, better suited for supplying our wants than those educated in Europe. To such an extent is this carried in the United States, that all denominations agree in this, if in nothing else, viz: that young men educated in the east are not well suited for laboring in the west, and that those educated in the north are not suited for the south, and, *vice versa*, so that each division has its seminaries for the education of candidates for the ministry, brought up in that

section of country where they are to labor. That we should never depend upon a supply from Europe, even though such a supply were the best, must be clear to every one who considers that the certainty of such a supply depends, not on the demands for clergymen here, but on the want of such demand there, or on some other equally uncertain and continually fluctuating cause. That our young men can never be properly educated for the ministry, by pursuing their studies with some of the country clergy, is evident, when we consider, on the one hand, the calls the clergy have already on their time, and on the other the opposition which they must expect in the discharge of their future duties, from the infidels on the one side, who are no longer the ignorant grovelling they were in former ages, and from the various bodies of dissenters on the other, whose clergy are year after year becoming more and more thoroughly educated.

That we possess at present no means of giving such an education to our young men, must strike any one who looks in vain throughout the length and breadth of this vast diocese, for a regularly established and well patronized "school of the Prophets."

The church has already felt severely this ; for parishes have been left unsupplied from the impossibility of obtaining clergymen to supply them, although the salaries were certain, and the fields most inviting. The very fact that, at the present time, there are in this vast diocese, to supply all vacancies occasioned by death and infirmity, and to supply new missions, only *three candidates for holy orders*, one of whom has received almost the whole of his education in Europe, speaks volumes on the subject. But we may be told that King's College, Toronto, and McGill College, Montreal, are to be schools of the prophets. This, however, has been the story for many years ; and it seems a very slender thread on which to risk the future supply for our churches.

Such I conceive to be a true, though afflictive picture of our wants, and of our weaknesses. And, as a sense of what they want is absolutely necessary before those unaccustomed to exertion can be induced to make the exertion necessary for obtaining what is wanted, I have considered it my duty, (since no one more able has undertaken the office,) thus plainly to set before you, my Rt. Rev. Father, and you, my Rev. Brethren, what none can deny to be our wants ; what none can doubt to be the weak points in the walls of our Zion ; and humbly, though earnestly, would ask, "are things to continue in this state ?" If so, we are only laboring that others may reap the fruits of our labors. We are, perhaps, building temples, in which the Virgin Mary and the holy calendar of saints may one day be invoked. To supply our wants, and to relieve us from our difficulties, we *must* no longer depend upon the favor of government, or trust much to the property we now hold, for

probably we will find them both but as broken reeds in the day of need. Not for the opening of new missions—for the support of old established parishes—for the maintenance of our Diocesan—for the establishment and support of Societies for circulating the scriptures, &c. and for endowing and supporting colleges for the education of our candidates for the ministry, we must depend, *chiefly*, under God, upon *our people*, and our own exertions. When we have done our utmost, we may look for assistance to the land whence we came, and I feel assured that we will not look in vain. But let us not look there, burdened as our friends are, till we have adopted every means and used every exertion within our power. Then we can go, if necessary, with the sweet consciousness of having exerted ourselves to the utmost, and without the dread of being reminded of the waggoner, praying to Hercules, before he had put his shoulder to the wheel.

The next point to which I would humbly beg the attention of my Rt. Rev. Father and my Rev. Brethren, is one delicate, indeed, and needing a more skilful hand than mine ; but, as none other has yet been put forward, and as I conceive that no time should be lost in calling to it the most serious attention, I approach it, though I do so with reluctance. This is an age proverbial for irregularity and disregard for all constituted authority ; an era, when old established principles are yielded up upon the impulse of a moment, without regret, without the slightest consideration, and when mankind appear willing to throw away all reason and submit themselves to the blind guidance of their feelings. In such an age, restraints upon all classes of men, are evidently more necessary, though more irksome, than in an age remarkable for its order and regard for authority. But what is the condition of our church in this age, abounding with confusion and every evil work ? Where is her discipline ? Where can we find laws binding upon all her officers ? Where are the rules, by the observance of which, she may appear "*semper et uligue ea-dem* ?" If there are any such, I know them not. If it be answered, that there are the canons of the church, which all admitted to minister at her altars are bound to observe, I reply that *they are not observed ; that in a country like this they cannot be observed*. The evil that might, and in some cases actually does arise, from this want of canons, suitable for the state of things in this country, must be manifest to all. So great is the difference that is to be found in different churches, in the order observed in the services, in the doctrines preached, in the different standards of holiness held up to the people, arising from this circumstance, and the want of regular schools of the Prophets, that a person, removing from one parish to another, feels himself as no longer a member of the same church, but as a stranger in a strange house. Under a kind and lenient Bishop, every man is, from

from this want of suitable canons, almost at liberty to do what is right in the sight of his own eyes. If his conduct be not grossly scandalous ; if he be tolerably diligent in preaching, and his other parochial duties, and if so inclined, he may, in a measure, set the Bishop at defiance, although he break through the customs and regulations of the church, as contained in her canons, for his plea may be, if your Lordship will shew me any code of laws, binding upon me, I will be happy to observe them. If he is answered, by having his attention called to the canons of the church, he may reply, I cannot observe them in a country like this ; your Lordship does not observe them all yourself, and if your Lordship chooses which to observe, and which to omit, surely I may be allowed the same privilege. A knowledge of this fact must make an indulgent Bishop pass over many things which appear trifling, but which, like the first letting out of water, bring with them troublesome consequences. Again, should the diocess come under the charge of a tyrannical Bishop, he could make the situation of his clergy extremely unpleasant, removable from place to place, as many of them are, solely at his nod ; in some instances, placed entirely under his absolute authority ; at a time, too, when they know that he has no precise laws, by which to be guided in his decisions ; when there would be no probability of obtaining redress, and when from his situation, in this distant country, a tyrannical Bishop (for a Bishop is still human,) would be relieved from the restraint which the proximity of his brother Bishops might exercise over one of a like spirit in England. This evil must appear still greater, if we consider that we are liable to have placed over us some favorite of the Prime Minister in England, himself possibly an Unitarian, an Infidel, or a Demi-Papist.

The case of Dr. Hampden and the University of Oxford should be a warning to us.

To meet all these wants, and to avoid all these difficulties, I see no other mode, than *a thorough change in our ecclesiastical arrangements*. To changes, in general, I am decidedly averse ; but when a change is absolutely necessary to the well being, or rather to the very existence of our church, let us not object to it. Whilst things remained as they were ten years ago, there was less cause for any change. But since our situation itself has been materially changed ; since, from being a mere body of missionaries, and of course under the control of the missionary society that sent us out and supported us by its bounty, having had that bond severed, we have been constituted a different body, some change in our arrangements is necessary to meet this change in our situation. What was perhaps good under former circumstances, is not so under present. The situation of our church at the present moment, and its probable situation a few years hence, (for I contend that we are bound to look to the future,) is very different from that of the church in England.

There she makes part of the constitution. The support of her clergy, of her bishops, and of schools for preparing her youth for the ministry are amply provided for by law. To deprive her of these provisions would require nothing less than a revolution. But are equally good provisions made for our church in this country? and are even the partial provisions we now have equally well secured to us? I think the facts already adduced will answer the former, and the signs of the instability of all our church property, so frequently seen in our political horizon, may answer the latter of these questions. But are the clergy of the church in England satisfied with their present condition? Do they not feel, that if they had their *right*, they would have, as they once had, their houses of convocation?

If these things are indeed so, and this no one can deny, are we called upon to rest contented with our present depressed condition? I think not. We *require some change*; a change which, under God, will meet our wants, and remove our difficulties. *No change will effect this, less than one by which we may be enabled, together with lay delegates from our parishes, frequently to meet in general council: nothing less than the adoption of a code of laws, embraced in a new constitution, can bring order and regularity to our church, nothing short of the admission of the laity in our councils will give us strength and energy.* The laity alone have in their hands what can supply our wants. Before we can avail ourselves of it, we must allow them to have some voice in its disbursement. This is human nature. No free nation will allow itself to be taxed, directly or indirectly, unless it has a voice in the disbursement of the monies raised by those taxes. That this change will, under God, effect the desired purpose, is no mere vain imagination. Experience is acknowledged on all sides to outweigh the most subtle arguments; and experience will tell us, that the very measures here proposed *have effected the very end desired*, under similar, or even much worse circumstances. No one can deny this, who is acquainted with the history of the church in the United States. Her situation at the time of the revolution was far worse than ours now is. In the words of one of her historians: "a few years nearly overthrew the work, which had been slowly carried forward by the exertions of a century and a half, and had not omnipotence interposed, the ruin would have been complete. The fostering hand, to which the American church owed a long continuance of care and protection, was withdrawn; and the "society for propagating the gospel" no longer rendered its accustomed aid. Many of the clergy were thus left entirely destitute, and some were obliged to betake themselves to secular employments for support. By an unjust decision, the lands held by the society for propagating the gospel, and situated in Vermont, were confiscated and applied to the purposes of education. An equally unconstitutional sentence, obtained through the united effort of sec-

tarians and infidels, despoiled the church in Virginia of its glebes and even of its houses of prayer ! While, in addition to all these calamities, Episcopalians in general became subject to unmerited and cruel political prejudices. Most of their churches were destitute of worshippers ; their clergy had departed, or were left almost entirely without maintenance ; no centre of unity remained, and no ecclesiastical government existed." Such was her condition then. For years she struggled to rise from this blow, and to live down those deep rooted prejudices which her former connexion with England and the loyalty of many of her members, had raised against her.

So late as 1811, she could only number eight Bishops and about two hundred clergy. Since that period, and especially within the last few years, she has risen like a Phoenix from her ashes. In the language of the historian before quoted, " Her Diocesses are twenty-two in number, under the superintendence of seventeen Bishops, with the venerable Bishop White still at their head. Her clergy amount to eight hundred, and are daily increasing in devotion, in learning, and in zeal. Her missionaries are studying the language of China, bending their steps to Syria and Persia, instructing the youth of Greece, civilizing the Indian of the western forests, and traversing the prairies of Missouri and Illinois. Her revenues for the propagation of religion, are constantly increasing, and through the operation of systematic benevolence, will soon enable her to enlarge her efforts and extend her privileges to thousands, who now scarcely know her name. Her numerous periodicals are circulating religious and ecclesiastical intelligence throughout her widely spread communion, and scattering the seeds of truth where the minister of God is seldom heard. Her four Theological Seminaries send forth more clergymen every three years than the whole church possessed thirty years ago. If it be asked how has all this been effected, the answer is, by the blessing of the great Head of the Church upon the wise councils and strenuous exertions of her children. If it be inquired what were the chief means used, I reply, the faithful preaching of God's word ; unity of purpose and action ; the adoption of canons suitable for the state of the country, and binding upon all ; and the active assistance of their laity. The conventions provided for by their constitution have been the *instruments*, under God, by which this wonderful change has been effected. The conventions are of two kinds—the general, representing the whole church in the union ; the diocesan, only the church in each diocess. In the former, such matters as regard the whole church are settled, as the ordering of public worship, the laws for the trial of delinquents amongst the Bishops and inferior clergy, &c. &c. : in the latter, such measures are adopted as concern each diocess in particular. The general convention is composed of two houses, the first styled the

House of Bishops, where all the Bishops in the union have a seat ; the second, the House of Clerical and Lay Delegates, elected thereto at the previous diocesan conventions in each diocese, which conventions are composed of the Bishop as its president, and clerical and lay delegates from each parish in connection with the convention. By the power lodged within them and by the influence they exert over all the members of the church, these conventions give her at once order, unity and strength. In them the laity, as is acknowledged on all hands, have proved most useful, especially in matters partaking rather of a secular nature, for which they are evidently better fitted than the clergy can be. Taking part in her councils, they have given to the church that energy and ability which we so greatly need. Interested in her welfare, they have been led to study her distinctive principles, and thus have learned to love her more and more, and at the same time obtained such knowledge as enables them, when asked, to give a reason of the hope that is in them, so different from many of our people, who, if asked why they are churchmen, could only answer that their parents happened to be church people, and that therefore they are so too, a reason which would equally have made them Jews or Mahomedans, if their parentage had been such. On no occasion have they given any trouble in the conventions : indeed, so far from such being the case, on some occasions, where bodies of the clergy have displayed an anxiety for change, and a disregard of their constituted authorities, *they* have invariably taken the side of order and good government. To prevent the possibility of their power becoming greater in the conventions than that of the clergy, a canon has been adopted, by which, on demand for its operation, the clergy and laity are called to vote by orders, the clergy first, and the laity afterwards ; and, then, without a majority of each order no measure can be adopted.

And why, I would humbly ask, are not we, my Rt. Rev. Father and my Rev. Brethren, why are not we to adopt the same measures, which have, with God's blessing, raised our sister church from her low estate, and rendered her the most flourishing body of christians in the union ? Will our superiors in England say "nay" to us ? Their wish must be, the prosperity of our Zion, and if we can convince them that by the adoption of the means here recommended, that prosperity will be greatly promoted, I feel assured that they will wish us "God-speed" in the name of the Lord. I trust that it will not be objected, that the church of England know nothing of lay delegation, and that, as a branch of that church, we must think of nothing of the kind. Should, however, such an objection be made, I reply, that it is asking too much of us, to leave us here without the decided advantages derived by the church in England from her connection with the state, and, at the same time, to debar us from availing ourselves of those advantages which she would

embrace, were it not for that very connection. Is it to be supposed that the church in England would refuse to avail herself of the assistance which the laity only can afford, and to admit them into her councils in order to obtain it, if she should be suddenly deprived of her right to tithes and the other property she possesses. But I suspect that *the laity have more control over the church in England* than many imagine. I ask, by whose authority was the present order of common prayer confirmed and allowed to be used in churches, but by that of the Parliament, composed of the three estates of the realm, in one only of which have the clergy any voice, and that but a slight one? By whose authority are some sees being abolished and others established, but by the same? By what authority can tithes be commuted? In short, who has the regulation of her revenues, but the same king, lords and commons? But further, by whose authority only could the slightest alteration be made in the order of her services, as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, except it be, by that of the same three estates of the realm? Indeed, the very authority, we wish for our conventions, composed entirely of churchmen, and the acquisition of which is objected to by some, because lay delegates are to be admitted thereto, is considered as well vested in a body of men, many of whom are papists, dissenters, unitarians and unbelievers, and who, altho' they number about a thousand in all, have amongst them less than thirty Bishops.

It may again be objected that the admission of the laity into the councils of the church is contrary to the practice of the apostolic and primitive church. To this I reply, that is not quite so clear as may be imagined. If we look at Acts 1 : 15, 16, 23 and 26, at 15 : 22, 23 and 25, we will find that the councils were not confined to the apostles. Ecclesiastical historians tell us, that the exclusion of the laity, and, soon after, of the inferior clergy from the councils, thence composed of the Bishops, was the beginning of that spirit which afterwards placed all the other Bishops under the feet of him of Rome.

Another objection may possibly be urged : such admission is unnecessary ; many other denominations do very well without it, and so may we. To this I answer, that where the laity are not admitted to the councils of the church, such measures are taken to gain their influence as *we can never take*. For this purpose the Romanists use the carnal weapons of a dark and gloomy superstition, and the Methodists the careful distribution of certain spiritual offices amongst her laity. And surely it is less objectionable to admit a layman to the councils of the church, where many matters of a purely secular nature must necessarily be discussed, than to the spiritual offices of preaching and exhorting.

It is said by some, that the Elders in the Presbyterian church, who have seats and voices in their councils, do not belong to

the laity. I, however, cannot consider them in any other light. I know that the form by which they are set apart for their office is never considered by their church as placing them in the ranks of the clergy, that they are esteemed by her as still belonging to, and representing in her councils, the laity. As such, they have been found useful in all ages of their church; as such, they are found useful in this country. Indeed, among the Methodists the want of the laity in their councils, has ever been a cause of complaint, and has occasioned the most extensive separations from that body of christians.

But still it may be objected that our people are too poor to follow the example set them by their fellow churchmen in the United States. In reply, I would ask the objector to reflect, that nearly all the wealthy in Upper Canada, that almost all the wealthy emigrants that make this country their home, and that the majority of the wealthy in Lower Canada, are members of the church. Let him look at the little diocese of Connecticut, with her eighty well educated and well supported clergy, and her flourishing college at Hartford, belonging to the church, and let him remember that the same little state was the chief seat of the Puritans, that the first Episcopal church erected therein was at New London, no longer ago than 1728, that almost all the accessions to her ranks have been from the descendants of the Puritans, and that she has gained her present high and flourishing condition by the adoption of the very means upon which we must rely. Let him look at Pennsylvania, by no means so large or so fertile as Upper Canada, settled too chiefly by the Quakers and the Dutch, and in the journal of her last convention he will learn that her parishes are ninety-one, her clergy, including two Bishops, eighty-six; her candidates for orders, twenty-five; that she supports twenty missionaries, has an episcopal fund of several thousand dollars; a fund for the support of widows and orphans of deceased clergymen, amounting to fifty thousand dollars. and a society which has circulated in the last two years eight thousand prayer books, and all this, without monies arising from lands held by the church, and without any assistance from without. In short, he will find that of eight hundred clergymen now in her service, nearly half were born and educated in other denominations; but, after mature deliberation, and at the sacrifice of much private feeling, have cast their lots with that once despised and persecuted, but now flourishing and eminently useful church.

Having thus stated, in a brief manner, the wants and difficulties of our church, and having taken the liberty to point out the means, by which, I conceive, we may be rescued, through God's blessing, from our present feeble condition, I would humbly beg, my Rt. Rev. Father and my Rev. Brethren, to give to what I have advanced that consideration which the importance of the subject might justly claim; and, if they feel that

our church requires their special prayers, their councils, their exertions, their united action, I would earnestly implore them to withhold them from her no longer.

Our past opportunities, suffered to glide by unimproved, should warn us to defer not till to-morrow what to-morrow it may be too late to do. The time *has been* when we might have made much better arrangements than we can make now. But it is probable that we can make much better arrangements now, than we will be able to make a year or two hence. Moreover, as year succeeds year, the numbers of our destitute church people are increased by emigration, whilst they are continually thinned by the accessions made from them to the ranks of dissenters, papists, and infidels. The number of our candidates for orders are each year becoming less and less, whilst our clergy are carried off by that merciless destroyer death, or are rendered unfit for active service by the infirmities of old age; and last, though by no means least, each month of delay brings us nearer to that hour, when, having finished his course, our beloved father shall be called hence to receive "that crown which the righteous Judge will give him at the last day." If, then, each year increases our wants and our difficulties, surely we are called no longer to delay our exertions. Surely to us the language of Solomon is addressed, "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." Let us, then, come together at the Bishop's several invitations, fully prepared to do something effectual for the good of our Zion. Let each pray, study, devise; let each come prepared to act, as if every thing depended upon him alone, and, when met together, let each approach the business with the feeling that he has talents committed to his care; but, at the same time, in the spirit of meekness, "each esteeming other better than himself;" and may the Lord give this his blessing: Amen.

ir
m
dd
oe
de
is
w,
er,
ch
ly
ia-
tes
our
re
e ;
ags
our
wn
If,
ely
the
nd-
th-
ne-
dy,
nd-
ach
l to
eas,
ord